

Journal #5948 from sdc 3.27.25

Storyteller

NEPA Comments due; urgent message from Ian Zabarte

'Soil is a living thing:' Why a healthy dirt program is again before Nevada lawmakers

What California could learn from the restoration of a Nevada lake

Structures mimicking beaver dams reduce waterborne parasites

SSMN Land Blessing

'President is obligated': Legal experts slam Trump order gutting Wilson Center, others

Interior reopens millions of acres in Alaska for energy development

Closures of regional EPA offices will hurt rural America

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From 1839 Map of the United States of North America

Honoring Tradition Through Buffalo Harvests



Blackfeet Storyteller by Howard Terpning (1927-)

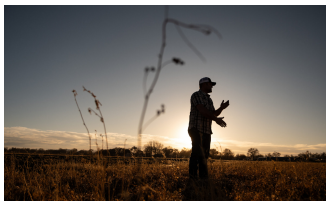
from Ian Zabarte

Please share. This will allow environmental racism. Environmental racism is racism against Indigenous people. Comments due 3-27-2025.

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/02/25/2025-03014/removal-of-national-environmental-policy-act-implementing-regulations>

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With soil as the backbone of healthy food and people, regenerative agriculture proponents seek to begin a voluntary statewide program.

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*Joe Frey in one the regenerative pastures he operates in Fallon on March 1, 2025. (David Calvert/The Nevada Independent)*

At first glance, not much sets Joe Frey's acreage just west of Fallon apart from the surrounding Northern Nevada farms and ranch land.

Golden stubs of alfalfa and grass poke pointy heads out of the earth; cattle huddle in a corner of a field as the Carson River meanders nearby.

It's what the naked eye can't see that sets Frey's operation apart.

Only organic products and processes are employed across the 1,000 acres of working land. But farming organically isn't enough for Frey, who considers himself not just a producer but a "land steward." His farm is also certified regenerative.

"When people say, 'What is regenerative?' I say, 'It's beyond organic,'" Frey said on a sunny February afternoon while driving down one of the many roads that cross the property.

Regenerative agriculture is a growing movement that focuses on restoring soil and ecosystem health through changes in agricultural production — emphasizing soil, water, plant, animal and consumer health over industrialized, chemical-reliant production.

There are no formal definitions of regenerative agriculture, but there are some agreed upon [basic tenets](#) such as reducing chemical inputs and working with natural systems rather than controlling them. Its implementation can lead to improved soil health, water conservation and a healthier food supply.

It's a concept that some land stewards are now looking to expand in Nevada through legislation.

“Soil is a living thing. If it’s not alive, it’s just dirt,” Frey told lawmakers in February. “There should be tons of life teeming in the soil.”

“Better soil grows better plants; better plants provide more nutrition.”

For the second consecutive session, Assm. Selena LaRue Hatch (D-Reno) is championing a bill that would implement a soil health program “to facilitate the conservation, protection and development of the renewable natural resources of this State, which includes soil.”

[AB80](#) would create an advisory board and a healthy soils initiative to encourage the voluntary adoption of soil health practices by agricultural producers.

If the bill passes, Nevada will join 19 [states that have codified soil health programs](#) and would allow the state “to basically hit the ground running,” said Jake Tibbits, Eureka County natural resources manager. “It may be an initiative on paper right now, but it would create the formal space to bring in partnerships ... to get a groundswell of support to stand it up.”



*A compost pile used by Joe Frey in his regenerative agricultural operation in Fallon on March 1, 2025. (David Calvert/The Nevada Independent).*

### **The proof is in the soil**

Although soil appears lifeless on the surface, it’s not an inert substance — it is [filled with](#) bacteria, fungi and other microbes.

Healthy soil regulates water, sustains plant and animal life, filters pollutants, cycles nutrients and supports plants.

While the widespread understanding of the importance of soil health has only gained traction in the [last several decades](#), nearly a century ago, the importance of having healthy soil was front and center.

In the 1930s, severe dust storms and drought dubbed the Dust Bowl plagued the Great Plains in the central United States. When Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected president in 1932, soil conservation was a priority; the Soil Erosion Service was created in 1933 under the Department of Interior and, in 1935, Congress directed the secretary of agriculture to establish the Soil Conservation Service (later renamed the [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)) under the United States Department of Agriculture.

Roosevelt also encouraged states to create conservation districts; there are now roughly [3,000 districts across the nation](#), including [28 in Nevada](#). Those districts assist with management of Nevada’s natural resources — including soil.

During the 2019 annual meeting of the Nevada Association of Conservation Districts that had an emphasis on soil health, attendees expressed a “groundswell of support” for starting a healthy soil program, said Tibbits, who serves on the association’s board.

“Farmers have been leading the soil health movement,” said Chuck Schembre, a regenerative specialty crop consultant and former director of UNR’s Desert Farming Initiative who helped work on the bill, told *The Nevada Independent*. In his experience, he said academics and others wanted to first see tangible results of regenerative agriculture practices and “farmers have really created the proof in the pudding.”

In 2021, Nevada lawmakers passed a resolution ([AJR2](#)) recognizing that healthy soils are linked to the quantity and quality of water. In 2023, LaRue Hatch (who grew up on a ranch) introduced [AB109](#), a soil health bill that mirrors her current legislation. While AB109 passed unanimously out of its first committee, it eventually died because it requested \$250,000 in state funds to begin the program. Last August, the Interim Joint Natural Resources Committee voted to bring the concept back to the 2025 session.

As [talks of budget constraints](#) swirl this session, LaRue Hatch has already introduced an amendment to AB80 that strips it of requests for state appropriations, instead allowing for private donations and federal funding.

“We made that change in hopes we can stand up the program,” she said.

If the bill passes, an advisory board can be put into place and regulations can be developed, she said, and although the program won’t have state funding for grants, it can offer education and provide a mechanism for the state to pull in federal money.

### **‘There are people out there who are searching for this’**

In 2019, the same year the Nevada Association of Conservation Districts held its soil health meeting, Frey attended a Texas conference where he heard a former federal soil scientist discuss regenerative agriculture. Frey, who’d grown up watching generations of his family work the land, also farmed in a conventional style, but what he heard at the conference struck a chord in him.

When he returned to Nevada, he jumped “whole hog” into trying regenerative practices.

He diversified the crops on his property, focusing on growing a mix of alfalfa and grasses. He eliminated all synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. He eschewed a prescriptive rotation schedule for cattle for one that paid attention to how the soil looked beneath their hooves.

It took some time for Frey’s new business model to catch on. For decades, his family’s operation had catered to local dairies and feedlots. As Frey started focusing on regenerative practices, traditional dairy farmers and feedlot owners weren’t interested in working with him anymore, his business partner Adrienne Snow said.

“It was too new, too different,” she said.



In addition to switching up their ranching and farming practices, Frey and Snow had to focus on cultivating new customers.

“I know not everybody will see the value, but there are people out there who are searching for this,” Snow recalled telling Frey.

In the past decade, they’ve created a business that is certified organic, certified regenerative and certified weed free.

“There’s doing some soil health practices, and then there’s being 100 percent intentional where all your farming is centered around soil health,” Schembre said. “It’s a big commitment that requires a lot of education and support.”

Not everyone can do what Frey has done, Tibbits said. Some producers need more direction, education or help to try new practices. That, proponents of AB80 say, is something the bill could do.

And with about [8.5 percent](#) of Nevada’s 70 million acres dedicated to farming and ranching, small, incremental steps by producers could have large-scale effects, Frey said.

“If you got 80 percent of the people to convert 10 percent of their practices, you’d have way more of an impact than if you got 10 percent of the farmers to convert 100 percent of their practices,” Frey said.

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What California could learn from the restoration of a Nevada lake

“California is not alone in its struggles to save its freshwater biodiversity. Across the West, rivers and lakes have been tapped to supply water to farms and cities—and ecosystems have paid the price. One project has been restoring water to a Nevada lake through an unusual mechanism: environmental water acquisitions. We spoke with the Walker Basin Conservancy’s Carlie Henneman and Peter Stanton to learn more. Q: First, tell us a little about Walker Lake. Peter Stanton: Walker Lake was once a thriving ecosystem in Nevada: people have lived around it for thousands of years. It’s a major North American Flyway stopover for migratory birds, and it’s also home to the largest freshwater trout in North America: the Lahontan cutthroat. This 40–50-pound fish has huge cultural and historical importance to the region. ... ” [Read more from the PPIC.](#)

Structures mimicking beaver dams reduce waterborne parasites

“To improve stream health and help restore wetlands, ecologists have increasingly looked to beavers for inspiration. Stream-spanning structures made of vegetation, called beaver dam analogues (BDAs), offer a cost-efficient way to slow down moving water. A new study suggests they have another benefit: improving water quality downstream. This week in *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*, researchers report that BDAs significantly reduce the amount of a waterborne protozoal pathogen, *Giardia duodenalis*, in stream water flowing through a cattle ranch in California. ... ” [Read more from the American Society for Microbiolog](#)

[AICMC a.k.a Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation](#)



Big Rock Miwuk welcoming and blessing ceremony, Sunday March 30th. Looking for volunteers to help shuttle from Bootjack to Big Rock, before and after the ceremony and for a couple volunteers to staff the gate.

Please message us if interested in a 1:30-2:00 hr. shift.

[Tišina T. Parker](#)

Shift is 1.5-2 hours long. Not from 1:30 - 2:00 pm

President is obligated': Legal experts slam Trump order gutting Wilson Center, others

President Donald Trump defied the intent of Congress with his recent executive order targeting the Wilson Center and five other federal agencies for which lawmakers had crafted legally binding charters and then allocated funds the White House was required to spend, legal experts and sources said. [Read more...](#)

Interior reopens millions of acres in Alaska for energy development

The Interior Department on Thursday said it will expand drilling opportunities for fossil fuels in the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the neighboring National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska to support President Donald Trump's vision of "American energy dominance."

[Read more...](#)

<https://dailyyonder.com/closures-of-regional-epa-offices-will-hurt-rural-america/2025/03/25/>

EPA reaches \$50,000 consent decree in SDWA case

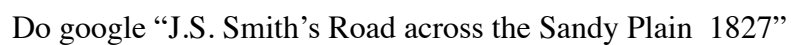
“The EPA recently announced a consent decree with the operators of the Oasis Mobile Home Park in California to resolve violations of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). The consent decree requires the park’s operators to upgrade its drinking water and wastewater systems and pay a \$50,000 penalty. “EPA is wholeheartedly committed to ensuring that everyone has safe water to drink,” said Joel Jones, the EPA’s Pacific Southwest Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division acting director, in an Agency news release. “We will continue to fully utilize the authorities of the [SDWA] to hold water operators accountable for meeting drinking water standards.” The mobile home park is located within the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians Tribal Reservation boundaries in Thermal, California, which is in the Eastern Coachella Valley. With an estimated population of 1,000 people, it’s the valley’s largest mobile home park, primarily serving agricultural workers, according to the EPA. ... ” [Read more from EHS](#).

EPA announces it will revise ‘waters of the U.S.’ definition

“The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency plans to review the definition of “[waters of the United States](#),” or WOTUS, EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin announced this month. Zeldin pledged to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to quickly revise the definition, which determines which waters are subject to the federal Clean Water Act. “The previous administration’s definition of ‘waters of the United States’ placed unfair burdens on the American people and drove up the cost of doing business,” Zeldin said in a statement. “Our goal is to protect America’s water resources consistent with the law of the land while empowering American farmers.” The pledge by the Trump administration’s EPA to revise the WOTUS definition follows a 2023 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that restricted the reach of the Clean Water Act. In *Sackett vs. EPA*, the court ruled that the act applies only to streams and wetlands that are connected to navigable waterways. ... ” [Read more from Ag Alert](#).

EPA seeks public input on WOTUS implementation post-Sackett ruling

“On March 24, 2025, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published plans to seek stakeholder input on implementing a new definition of “waters of the United States” (WOTUS) under the Clean Water Act (CWA). The EPA’s goal is to align its WOTUS implementation with the Supreme Court’s 2023 decision, *Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency*. Specifically, EPA is requesting feedback on the scope and application of “relatively permanent” waters; the scope and application of “continuous surface connection” and the scope of jurisdictional ditches. The EPA has opened a 30 day comment period and will host stakeholder listening sessions beginning in April through May 2025. Written comments are due by April 23, 2025, and listening session **registration instructions and dates are forthcoming. ... ”** [Read more from Best Best & Krieger](#).





Honoring tradition through Buffalo harvests

Tanka Fund was recently invited to participate in cultural harvests with two of our Texas rancher partners — one with Texas Tribal Buffalo Project during the Southern Plains Buffalo Harvest in Floresville, and another at GP Ranch in Sulphur Springs.

Both events offered a powerful glimpse into the care, tradition, and purpose that guide Buffalo harvesting. From shared community meals to cultural practices and land stewardship, each experience highlighted the ongoing work of honoring tradition, sharing knowledge, and supporting Buffalo restoration efforts.

Last month, Tanka Fund participated in the third annual Southern Plains Buffalo Harvest, hosted by our rancher partners at Texas Tribal Buffalo Project. The ceremony honored the Buffalo's sacrifice while preserving the ancestral food traditions of the Lipan Apache.

This year's harvest was particularly significant, marking the reclamation of 150 acres of ancestral homeland in Floresville, TX, — land sacred to the Lipan Apache, Coahuiltecano, Carrizo Comecrudo, and Southern Plains Buffalo peoples. More than a continuation of tradition, it was a moment of healing, sovereignty, and reconnection to the land these tribes' ancestors once roamed.

As part of this gathering, TTBP hosted Tipi Talks — an exclusive space created by and for Indigenous women to share their stories, knowledge, and vision for the future.

The harvest was a hands-on cultural experience, where attendees engaged in traditional practices such as learning butchering techniques, listening to storytelling, having critical discussions, and sharing a community meal.



Our Rancher Partners: Ed from Cloud III



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Edward Iron Cloud III (Oglala Lakota) of Knife Chief Buffalo Society Ranch is one of our rancher partners on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Ed, as he is commonly called, frequently speaks about how Buffalo are a living connection to his people.

For generations, Buffalo provided food, clothing, and shelter. Today, even in smaller numbers, their presence continues to offer strength — both physical and spiritual.

Harvesting is done with prayer and deep respect, and the meat, once blessed, becomes more than nourishment — it carries spiritual power.

“The Buffalo is going to give its life, and we are going to eat the animal, gain strength, and continue to live because we have food. With everything, there is spirit to it... the land, air, water, and the animals. We acknowledge that and honor it,” he said. “I don’t consider myself a rancher; I consider myself a caretaker. We aren’t taking care of them, they are taking care of us.”

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And if you think you have problems.....

A rare sea turtle stranded in Wales now faces an unexpected obstacle to getting home – Trump. Rhossi, a Kemp's ridley sea turtle, is due to return to its native habitat in the Gulf of Mexico, or Gulf of America as it is now known in the US. However, executive orders signed in the White House means international marine turtle conservation work is on hold, leaving Rhossi in limbo.

